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'Cuba more Sovietized'

Defector from Castro intelligence network says 1968 pact binds Havana to Moscow line

By a staff correspondent of
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Washington

A Cuban intelligence officer, who defected to the United States earlier this year, says that Premier Fidel Castro signed an accord with the Soviet Union in 1968 which commits him to a pro-Moscow line.

The assertion, it is felt, would explain the noticeable pro-Moscow line being followed by Cuba—a trend which began at the time of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia last August.

According to the defector, Orlando Castro Hidalgo, the Cuban-Soviet agreement requires the Cuban leader to mute his criticism of the Soviet Union and of Moscow-oriented Communist parties in Latin America.

In return, the Soviet Union agreed not to diminish its economic support of Premier Castro's government and also to provide some 5,000 technicians to work in a variety of fields to support Cuba's lagging economy.

These disclosures are part of the testimony being given by Mr. Castro Hidalgo, who is no relation to the Cuban Premier. It was learned from informed sources that he left his post as protocol officer of the Cuban Embassy in Paris late in March of this year and sought asylum for himself and his family at the United States Embassy in Luxembourg.

Since then, Mr. Castro Hidalgo has been undergoing extensive questioning together with explaining an attaché case full of documents he carried with him when he arrived in Luxembourg.

Mr. Castro Hidalgo now is in the United States under protective custody.

The Christian Science Monitor learned of Mr. Castro Hidalgo's presence in the United States, and as far as is known this is the first mention of his defection and his disclosures to United States officials.

It is understood that the Cuban Government has asked the French Government for assistance in returning both Mr. Castro Hidalgo and the documents he brought with him when he defected. But Cuban sources would make no comment on this subject nor admit that Mr. Castro Hidalgo had defected when asked for comment.

Informed sources here say that Mr. Castro Hidalgo has been a veritable gold mine of information on developments in Cuba. Although he was not a major official in the Cuban Government, he apparently had considerable access to documents and other intelligence materials as a part of the Cuban intelligence service in Europe.

That service, according to Mr. Castro Hidalgo's testimony, is put at the disposal of the Soviet Union under terms of the 1968 agreement. Known as General Directorate of Intelligence (or DGI after its Spanish initials), the service has been extending its operations in Europe recently.

According to Mr. Castro Hidalgo, this growing Soviet influence in Cuba was the reason for his defection.

Betrayal seen

In his own way, Mr. Castro Hidalgo sees this increasing Soviet influence, brought on by Premier Castro, as a betrayal of the Cuban revolution and the goals for which he personally fought both in the Sierra Maestra and afterward.

Mr. Castro Hidalgo, in his testimony, says that his immediate superior in the Paris Embassy, Armando López Orta, returned from Havana last January with word of the Cuban-Soviet treaty and this pronouncement:

"Somos más soviéticos" (We are more Sovietized).

According to Mr. Castro Hidalgo's version of the accord, which has remained secret until now, the Soviet Union for its part agreed to keep up the level of economic assistance which has been flowing to Cuba in the past several years. That aid is computed in official circles here at something in the neighborhood of \$350 million yearly.

Technicians provided

The Soviet Union, it is understood, also agreed to increase badly needed petroleum shipments to Cuba, to purchase more of Cuba's production of nickel ore, and to send some 5,000 Soviet technicians to advise the Castro government in the fields of science and technology.

These technicians, Mr. Castro Hidalgo says, are to be used in providing support in agriculture, mining, atomic energy, fishing, and military fields.

However, some Soviet assistance in the DGI is part of the agreement.

To informed sources here, this aspect of the secret agreement is particularly significant in that the DGI is understood to have taken on many of the diplomatic activities formerly handled by foreign service officers.

In light of the general reduction of Soviet intelligence operations in France and elsewhere in Western Europe in recent years, the presence of a Soviet-oriented Cuban intelligence system is regarded by informed sources here as important.

Claim confirmed

Mr. Castro Hidalgo claims to have been part of that system and the documents he brought out confirm this claim.

But the documents are of even greater importance — although they do not contain the

Moreover, taken together with his testimony and known facts about situations in Latin America, Europe, and elsewhere, the United States has learned a great deal about Cuba and its activities through Mr. Castro Hidalgo's defection.

The defector was a DGI operative in Paris. He states that he helped organize and operate a clandestine apparatus in the French capital aimed at providing Latin-American revolutionaries and guerrilla leaders with money, false passports, and hideouts during their travels to and from Cuba.

According to Mr. Castro Hidalgo, the Paris center for the DGI conducts operations into South America, while the Cuban Embassy in Mexico City coordinates operations in Central America and the Caribbean.

As far as guerrilla activities in Latin America are concerned, Mr. Castro Hidalgo says that the secret Cuba-Soviet accord makes no specific mention of their role — presumably leaving Premier Castro free to operate much as before in the question of armed insurrection throughout Latin America.

Conflicts apparent

There are apparent conflicts between the Soviet Union and Premier Castro over this question, but Mr. Castro Hidalgo says that Havana's support for the "export of revolution" to Latin America is not diminished by the accord.

However, the DGI is reported to have told its people that there must be a more meticulous screening of Latin Americans before they are put into the pipeline for guerrilla training in Cuba. It is also understood, according to Mr. Castro Hidalgo's testimony, that Cuba has decided not to send out military leaders to aid Latin-American revolutionary groups until these groups have reached a significantly high state of development.

Implicit in the Castro Hidalgo testimony is awareness on the part of Cuban officials that the guerrilla effort led by Ernesto Che Guevara made a number of errors.

It is understood that Mr. Castro Hidalgo's disclosures of Cuban plans and the names of agents and others working for Havana throughout the world has been an important development in United States intelligence activities.

The presence of Mr. Castro Hidalgo and his family—a wife and two small boys—was confirmed by the Department of State, although it would give no further details.

Mr. Castro Hidalgo is a 31-year-old Cuban, born in Puerto Padre, in Oriente Province in the eastern part of the island. His mother and five younger brothers and a sister still live on the island.

He joined Premier Castro's 26th of July Movement in March, 1957, fighting mainly in the Sierra Maestra. After Premier Castro came to power, Mr. Castro Hidalgo stayed with the Army and served in campaigns against guerrillas in the Escambray Mountains and against the invaders at the Bay of Pigs.

His schooling has been somewhat spotty. He left in the middle of secondary school and since then has been largely self-taught. He talks slowly, measuring his words carefully, and has an air of self-confidence and sophistication.

Selected for training

Selected for intelligence training by the Castro government in 1965, Mr. Castro Hidalgo got a grounding in both intelligence theory and tactics and guerrilla warfare practice. He also was given training in language prior to being sent to France in March, 1967.

His wife, Norma, had originally been on a list of those Cubans desirous of emigrating to the United States under the provisions of a Cuban-United States accord—but took her name off the list when she married.

It is understood that the fact that her name had been on the list was discovered by Cuban intelligence people in Havana and that an investigation of the situation was under way at the time the family defected to the United States Embassy in Luxembourg. Sources here say that she played something of a role in leading to the defection, but at the same time, Mr. Castro Hidalgo had his own reasons for defecting.

Other disclosures

Among other disclosures made by Mr. Castro Hidalgo are these:

- Col. Francisco Caamaño Desñó, the leader of the 1965 Dominican revolution, is now in Cuba and that he arrived there shortly after Mr. Guevara's death at the hands of the Bolivian Army in October, 1967. At first Cuban officials thought they would use the Dominican officer as a replacement for Mr. Guevara, but since that time there has been no evidence that they have done so.

- Guyanan Prof. Dr. Walter Rodney, whose presence in Jamaica last year caused a furor, was helped by Cuban intelligence forces in Paris to travel to Cuba by way of both Paris and Prague.

- Prensa Latina, the Cuban news service now regarded as being run by DGI elements, was involved in a plan to infiltrate pro-Cuban agents into the ruling military junta of Gen. Juan Velasco Alvarado in Peru.

- The names of Cuban intelligence agents in Chile—together with the concern on the part of Premier Castro and his associates that Eduardo Frei Montalva, Chile's reformist president, was usurping Premier Castro's place and influence in Latin America.